

ACCOUNTING POLICY

TOPIC: Section 12--Travel 3.0	EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/19/83
TITLE: Out-of-State Travel Approval	REVISION DATE: 9/22/04
AUTHORIZED BY: Cheryl Thompson, Financial Manager	PAGE 1 OF 6

BACKGROUND

Chapter 228.2 Blb, *DHFS Supervisor's Manual*, provides that the Secretary's Office or delegated designee's advance approval is required for all out-of-state meetings and conferences, including any trips to Chicago, Minneapolis/St.Paul and within a fifty-mile radius of Wisconsin. This policy delegates this approval authority to Division Administrators/Office Directors. This policy also expands the policy on special procedures for out-of-state travel related to border states to include business meeting trips (i.e., with Federal staff) to Chicago and Minneapolis/St.Paul. See Policy #6 below and the following special procedure for out-of-state travel related to routine work assignments in border states.

Each Division/Office prepares a detailed out-of-state travel plan which is reviewed and approved by the Division Administrator/Office Director. Out-of-state travel not specified within the plan will also need to be approved by the Division Administrator/Office Director.

POLICIES

Out-of-State Travel - Divisions and Offices should maintain plans for out-of-state travel for each fiscal year. The plans must include the following information for each trip: the names of employees traveling on each trip, the purpose, duration, destination, sources of funding and the cost of each trip. Approval of these plans is delegated to each Division Administrator and Office Director except for trips involving more than two individuals. Trips involving more than two people must be pre-approved by the Deputy Secretary.

As a Departmental goal, the Secretary's Office wants to minimize cost and staff time away from the workstation or office. On the other hand, Department personnel need to represent the State at meetings with federal and other agencies where funding considerations are important. Further, the Secretary's Office wants Department employees to keep current on their professional skills in an ever-changing work and technical environment.

Limited Travel - Agencies should develop internal review and monitoring mechanisms for travel, particularly for out-of-state activities. Technology options should be utilized whenever possible. In addition, agencies have been recently urged to be extremely vigilant regarding personally assigned vehicles and general utilization of fleet vehicles. In lieu of submitting detailed travel reports to the State Budget Office, agencies should instead transmit a copy of their internal review process to their budget analyst.

Before an employee is permitted to attend an out-of-state conference, convention, seminar, meeting or training course, the Division Administrator/Office Director should ensure and document that a clear state interest is being served. The availability of non-GPR funds (project,

federal, personal, etc.) should not be the criteria for approval of out-of-state travel requests since time away from the job is still a state expense.

Any trips funded in whole or part by GPR funds should be reviewed closely for possible elimination. Out-of-state travel should be limited to trips that are required to meet programmatic responsibilities and should be limited to as few individuals as possible. Full justification must be on file maintained in each division/office for those rare situations where more than one individual needs to attend. Alternatives such as videoconferencing, teleconferencing, web-conferencing and webcasting should be used where possible.

Division Administrators/Office Directors and other managers must assess the priorities for the use of employees' time. Priority must be first given to "getting the job done." The key test to decisions regarding travel and training is whether or not the travel is the highest and best use of scarce staff resources. For this reason, advance planning for major travel and training is needed.

The following guidelines apply for approving the out-of-state travel plans:

1. The plan dollar totals for the New SFY should not exceed the Previous SFY plan total. Divisions/Offices should seek to minimize GPR funding of out-of-state travel. Out-of-state travel should be at minimum cost and involve minimum time away from the office.

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2. The priority for the use of key managers' time is to be at their home station/work-site as much as possible. The potential benefits of out-of-state trips should be balanced against this need. Although establishing and maintaining important business relationships is recognized, the minimum number of people to conduct business or receive training should be considered when out-of-state travel is associated with the activity. When possible, staff attending should receive the training and pass it on to others. Limit the number of staff authorized for out-of-state travel. For example, two or three people should not attend the same meeting when one person can conduct the department's business.

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3. Preference should first be given to training in-state, then Midwest. Only after that should longer distances be considered.

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personally assigned vehicles and general utilization of fleet vehicles. In lieu of submitting detailed travel reports to the State Budget Office, agencies should instead transmit a copy of their internal review process to their budget analyst.

4. Membership in a national or regional organization is not sufficient justification for attendance at an organization's regional and/or national meetings. Even if travel expenses are paid by the organization, there is the time spent away from the office to consider.
5. Most federal grant programs require some out-of-state travel or training. Activities to influence federal decisions should be limited to issues with significant effects on the state, and where participation is likely to be successful. Divisions and Offices should encourage federal and professional organizations to hold regional training and conferences near our area.
6. Routine work assignments that require an employee to travel out-of-state (border state travel) may receive blanket approval. These routine work assignments include client placement and related services, client contacts, meetings with medical and rehabilitation facilities that Department clients attend to receive services, and licensing activities. This blanket approval for border state travel has been expanded so that it may include business meetings (i.e., with Federal employees) in Chicago and Minneapolis/St. Paul. (See Procedure #4 for special blanket approval procedures.)

PROCEDURES

1. Out-of-State Travel - Divisions and Offices should maintain plans for out-of-state travel for each fiscal year. The plans must include the following information for each trip: the names of employees traveling on each trip, the purpose, duration, destination, sources of funding and the cost of each trip. Approval of these plans is delegated to each Division Administrator and Office Director except for trips involving more than two individuals. Trips involving more than two people must be pre-approved by the Deputy Secretary.

Division Administrators/Office Directors are delegated to approve their division's/office's annual out-of-state travel plan as part of the annual budget process. The annual out-of-state travel plan is not to include the routine and business meeting out-of-state travel listed in #6 above.

2. This delegation authorizes Division Administrators/Office Directors to approve trips which are substitutes for those in the approved plan (a trip that is of approximately equal or lesser cost than one in the approved plan).
3. Out-of-state travel that is not in the plan and is not a substitute (as described in number 2 above) will need to be approved separately by the Division Administrator/Office Director.

4. Special blanket approval may be granted by the Division Administrator/Office Director for out-of-state travel (border state) related to routine work assignments and business meetings as described in #6 above. This procedure does not apply if the employee attends a conference or training activity. Each organization shall submit, to their Division Administrator/Office Director, a written request containing a list of classifications by employing unit whose routine work assignments will take them out of state. The employing unit information shall include Office/Bureau/Region/Field Office/Institution. (See attachment for a sample list).

Note: The Secretary's Office has expanded the border state travel policy to include business meetings (i.e., with Federal employees) in Chicago and Minneapolis/St.Paul.

Even though border state travel is not to be included in the annual out-of-state plan, all costs associated with the border state travel are to be charged to the out-of-state coding (Budget).

Once the list is approved, a copy should be forwarded to Harlan Olson of the Accounts Payable/Preaudit Section - Bureau of Fiscal Services. An employee and/or organization will not be required to attach an approval to each reimbursement voucher. Accounts Payable/Preaudit will refer to the approved list to see that the appropriate classification for that employing unit is listed. Should there be any questions, Accounts Payable/Preaudit will contact the appropriate fiscal contact within that organization.

5. The required documentation, which needs to be submitted to the Accounts Payable/Preaudit Section, is the original invoice with "OK to Pay" sign-off or the original travel voucher with the supervisor's sign-off. The "OK to Pay" sign-off on the invoice or the supervisor's signature on the travel voucher indicates that the out-of-state expense is appropriate and necessary based upon the applicable guidelines within this Accounting Policy, and the "Out-of-State Travel Plan" approved for the Organization.

Documentation showing the Division Administrator/Office Director approval of the out-of-state expense is no longer required to be attached to each payment request/voucher submitted to the Accounts Payable/Preaudit Section.

6. In addition, all out-of-state travel for non-state employees must be processed and approved as stated above.
7. A copy of each Division or Office approved plan must be available for review and/or audit.

ATTACHMENTS

Blanket Approval for Border State Travel

REFERENCES

DHFS Supervisor's Manual, Chapter 228.2 Blb

CONTACTS

Harlan Olson
Accounts Payable/Preaudit Section
(608) 267-9301

Jean Gevelinger, Chief
Accounts Payable/Preaudit Section
(608) 266-0594

ATTACHMENT

BLANKET APPROVAL FOR BORDER STATE TRAVEL

(Use your division letterhead)

(Use date you are submitting your request)

To: Harlan Olson
Accounts Payable/Preaudit Section
Bureau of Fiscal Services
Division of Management and Technology

From: , Administrator/Office Director

Approved

The Department of Health and Family Services *Accounting Policy and Procedures Manual* bulletin, **Travel 3.0**, establishes the policies and procedures regarding approval of border state travel. The classifications of employees on the list below will be periodically required to conduct routine work assignments that involve border state travel.

I am approving the blanket approval for border state travel for employees to do routine work assignments and business meetings (i.e., with Federal employees) as described in number 6 on page 2 of Travel 3.0. These are all client-related work assignments and business meetings and are not for attending conferences or training activities.

The list of classifications of employees authorized includes:

<u>Classifications</u>	<u>Employing Unit</u>	<u>Headquarters City</u>
	(Office/Bureau/Region/ Field Office/Institution	